



CMEAA
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN AFFAIRS
M I C H I G A N

Meeting Minutes
February 8th, 2017, 12:00 P.M.

Arab American and Chaldean Council
363 W. Big Beaver Rd., Suite 300
Troy, MI 48084

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Manal Saab, Chair
Michael Romaya, Vice Chair
Sharif Hussein, 2nd Vice-Chair
Lina Harajli, Treasurer
Suzanne Sukkar, Secretary
Mariam Bazzi, Trustee
Bing Goei, Ex-Officio
Dave Abdallah

Wendy Acho
Fay Beydoun
Susan Dabaja
Haifa Fakhouri
Adel Mozip
Abe Munfakh

Excused: Bishr Al-Ujayli, Ronald Haddad

Staff: Shelly Edgerton (LARA Director), Nicholas Payne (Cabinet Liaison), Ron Robinson (Assistant Attorney General), Justine Foy (LARA Assistant), Raya Fares (CMEAA Coordinator)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Manal Saab at 11:50 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Chair Saab welcomes newly appointed Commissioner Ronald Haddad.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Bazzi moved to accept the agenda. Motion supported by Commissioner Romaya. Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Sukkar moved to accept the minutes of October 27, 2016. Motion supported by Commissioner Bazzi. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Harajli reviewed the Spending Plan with the commission and explained a detailed report will become available after the RFP is awarded.

MOTION: Commissioner Romaya moved to accept the CMEAA Treasurer's Report. Motion supported by Commissioner Hussein. Motion passed unanimously.

V. RFP

Coordinator Raya Fares updated the Commission on the status of the RFP, which closed on February 7th at 3:00PM, and explained that the Joint Evaluation Committee will evaluate the RFP Bids within the next 7 days. Raya Fares will provide updates to the commission as they become available.

VI. LARA/MONA DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Coordinator Raya Fares updated the commission on the Patriots & Peacemakers Exhibition hosted at Lansing Community College during the spring of 2017. The exhibit is scheduled to open in early March and will remain open until late June. A VIP Reception has been scheduled for April 26th from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. Governor Snyder's attendance has been confirmed for the VIP Reception.

Director Edgerton spoke to the Commission and mentioned that she would like LARA's finance department to give a presentation on the RFP and funding process at CMEAA's next meeting. She mentioned that Governor Snyder's proposed budget for the 2017/2018 fiscal year will have an increased budget of \$25,000 for each ethnic commission.

Nick Payne reminded the commission of Governor Snyder's commitment to the ethnic commissions, reaffirming his continued efforts to make Michigan a Welcoming State.

Director Goei mentioned that MITS is hiring and would appreciate Commissioners to share the application with their networks. Director Goei shared letters of solidarity from MAPAAC and HLC in support of CMEAA's Press Release. Director Goei shared an initiative from the Joint Legislative Committee to share stories of refugees, immigrants and ethnic Americans in an effort to dispel misconceptions about immigrants and refugees.

House Bill 4105 was brought to the commission's attention, as other ethnic commissions have already taken a verbal stance on the bill. Commissioner

Romaya will draft a statement on the bill and provide an electronic copy to the Commission for approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Munfakh moves for CMEAA to oppose House Bill 4105. Commissioner Dabaja supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. OPEN DISCUSSION ON EXECUTIVE ORDER OF JANUARY 27, 2017

Chair Saab provided the commission with press talking points for all to utilize after the CMEAA Statement on Banning Immigrants on Basis of Nationality was issued.

Commissioner Abdallah stated his concern with the EO is the blatant racism. As an immigrant, he supports complete vetting of all immigrants.

Commissioner Hussein reminds the commission that as Commissioners, your public voices and opinions represent the Commission and the MEA people in the State of Michigan.

Commissioner Beydoun suggests that each Commissioner go back to their respective organizations and work collectively to help push CMEAA's mission.

Commissioner Bazzi would like to see CMEAA involved in dialogue with the administration to reinstate the local community cooperation in combating terrorism. Perhaps by sponsoring the invitation for federal law enforcement agencies to speak with the community organizations. Bridges focuses on Arab American Leadership

Ron Robinson reminded commissioners that by taking a position on the commission, that does not relinquish the right to your own individual opinions.

Commissioner Sukkar would like to see CMEAA continue to act as an advisory committee to the Governor and the Director. Commissioner Sukkar would appreciate more conversations with the administration on how to increase vetting procedures.

Commissioner Dabaja would like to see commissioners be part of the dialogue, rather than just taking a stand.

Commissioner Mozip discussed his personal experience with vetting, having waited over 7 years to receive a visa. He would like to see CMEAA focus on furthering discussions with the Governor on increasing immigrants in our state.

VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

From the public, Paul Sophiae addressed the commission.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m. by Chair Saab.



Suzanne K. Sukkar, Secretary



Manal B. Saab, Chair